

**Fredericksburg, Va., 22401
November 17, 1995**

**Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
The Commission of Fine Arts
The Pension Building
441 F Street, N.W., Suite 312
Washington, D.C., 2001-2728**

Dear Mr. Atherton:

What a sweet letter.

I am happy to hear from you. To ensure that this letter is received and a response is sent, I will send you another letter if I have not heard from you by December 15, 1995.

I am interested in applying for permission for a 3 foot by 3 foot bronze plaque to be placed opposite the vertex of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to honor those who have died since the end of the Vietnam War because of the war. I need to know the procedure for applying for permission.

That was the gist of my letter to you. Enclosed is the introductory letter I have sent to those interested in the "In Memory Plaque Project". It will tell you exactly what we want and why we want it. I realize there are and will be many objections to this project, but I feel it is worth pursuing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth Coder Fitzgerald

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Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
The Commission of Fine Arts
The Pension Building
441 F Street N.W., Suite 312
Washington D.C., 20001-2728

Dear Mr. Atherton:

I am writing to you because I believe an addition should be made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. I would like an approximately 3' x 3' bronze plaque to be placed at ground level near the sidewalk linking the two statues opposite the vertex of the Wall to honor the men and women whose post-war deaths resulted from their experience in Vietnam. These more than 100,000 deaths are no less tragic than the deaths of those who died in Vietnam.

My brother, John Keath Coder, died July 17, 1992, in the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. He was a patient there because he had non-Hodgkins lymphoma caused by exposure to Agent Orange. He is buried in Des Moines, Iowa, where his family still lives.

John served in the Air Force from 1965 until 1970. He was stationed at DaNang, South Vietnam, from April, 1969-April, 1970, as a helicopter pilot in the 37th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron. He flew a CH53 (Jolly Green Giant). He received a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal for participation in rescues of downed pilots in southeast Asia.

Before his service in the Air Force John earned a BA from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. After his service he earned his MBA from the University of Kansas. He worked in Des Moines at the time of his death.

Before non-Hodgkins lymphoma made him too ill to participate, John was active in his church and coached a number of youth sports teams. He was a wonderful husband, father, son, brother and friend. He was 49 years old when he died.

There are many other people like John whose names will never be on memorials, but whose lives were ended prematurely because of their service in Vietnam.

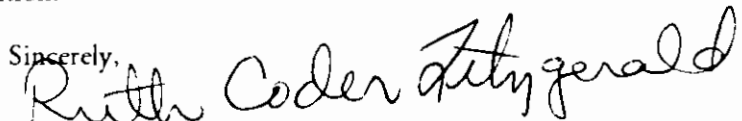
Because there are too many already dead and too many yet to die because of their service in Vietnam, it would be impractical to name them all. Also, I believe, no one wants another free-standing monument in the vicinity of the Wall. Because of that I suggest the 3 foot square plaque near the sidewalk opposite the vertex of the Wall, with words yet to be determined, honoring all those who have died because of their service in Vietnam. Such a plaque would therefore include people such as my brother, John Keath Coder, as well as people who committed suicide such as Lewis Puller, Jr.; people who have died from alcoholism and drugs, and extend recognition to others, governmental and non-governmental, who served our nation in non-military but vital roles in Vietnam. Its inclusive scope would be similar to that of the "In Memory" honor list program of the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

I am sure that money for this project could be easily raised.

I would appreciate hearing your opinions and advice on this project.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Coder Fitzgerald". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ruth Coder Fitzgerald